

Session: Rebuilding and Community Preparedness

John Jacob: Resilient Coastal Communities National Sea Grant Program – Smart Growth Initiative

- Galveston Island 1900 Hurricane – most loss of life in natural disaster
- Not every structure damaged as much most completely destroyed. Differences in construction
- The downtown fared the best is on the bay side. Because large buildings and good construction, was storm surge. Example of ‘new urban’ mixed use
- Buildings still standing on strand.
- Houston: 4 million people will be coming in next 10+ Years. ***Most living only 20 ft or less above sea level. How will development patterns affect people’s safety, the environment, character***
- ***Smart growth = safe growth. It’s all about density.*** Most important thing about density is not only that it keeps people out of natural areas, but need density needed to have vibrant interesting city. Whether small coastal city or large city. Need to be able to walk around.
- 10 Principles of smart growth - designing cities for people not cars
 1. Mixed land use
 2. Compact Design
 3. Range of housing choices
 4. Attractive
 5. Preserve open space
 6. Direct development to cities
 7. Transportation choices
 8. Development decisions clear
- Smart Growth and Disaster Resilience:
 - Areal Issues: More compact means less area to protect. Consequently a better job can be done, better sea walls etc...
 - More choices to where you develop, susceptible areas can be avoided.
 - Ex. New Orleans first developed on high ground.
 - Many people don’t want to hear the word ‘density,’ need to show properly defined density, use different phrasing
- Building Issues:
 - Mixed Use means sturdier buildings closer by.
 - Denser growth enables more resistant construction overall, shared walls etc... at a cheaper cost
- Transportation Issues:
 - Better mix of transit and cars might mean more efficient evacuation.
 - Better Transportation planning could result in more nucleated urban pattern. Easier to evacuate at staging areas.

- Transit-efficient mortgages = better houses. If not paying so much for auto transportation can afford better constructed house.
- Social Capital Issues: ‘Bowling Alone’ recommended reading How important is social capital in terms of disaster planning? People know who need help, who is missing. Example given of sign ‘never see vehicles, never see neighbors’
- Not just about big cities, also about small communities, e.g., Rockport who want to maintain character, funky coastal communities, don’t want to be part of sprawl of other big cities, trying to give them tools to make choices, not take away choices. We need to give them tools.
- ***Every state has sea grant coastal community development liaison. (only three people raised their hands in response to question “who knows their liaison?)***
- Seaside, Florida: very important example because it is DENSE, average 20 units per acres. Average is 4 or 5 per acre. Another “new urbanist” town, Alys Beach is currently being built in N. Florida, they are building it out of cinder block and filling voids with concrete. ***Unfortunately, everything is very expensive.***
- Mississippi renewal forum – see www.mississippirenewal.com . Wal-Mart might build proper façade and parking in back in Pass Christian. It isn’t about façade it is about density. ***Need imagination to see where we are going - a vision that includes better city and environment.***

Maria Cahill:

Local Government Policies Guide Recovery and Rebuilding

- Florida’s Experience with redevelopment planning
- Redevelopment planning still much to do
- DCA is lead planning agency and houses emergency mgt, HCD?, CPD?
- Federal Stafford Act is first national act to require planning – implemented by emergency management agencies
- CPD? overseas growth mgt activities and land-use planning
- Community Planning
 - Requirements related to coastal development and redevelopment planning. The state of Florida hasn’t had much experience in redevelopment planning, are supposed to have plans, many do not, under pressure to rebuild fast after hurricane.
- Florida’s planning Framework
 - Chapter 163 Growth mgt act
 - ***Must do post disaster redevelopment plan, though not required to be adopted as part of comprehensive plan, means no state oversight.***
 - ***Since no oversight there is no penalty if the local governments do not do this***
 - Comprehensive Emergency Mgt Plan focuses on immediate recovery, example, where are shelters, first response, etc...
 - Plan does have mitigation annex, but ***often focused on “brick and mortar,” very focused on individual mitigation projects, not on how to avoid problems or planning.***

- Local Mitigation Strategy – First initiated by Florida, adopted by federal government in Stafford Act
- Comprehensive Plan, look at community holistically, including hazards, development patterns, etc... do have mitigation requirements, but these predate much of today and only apply to coastal counties.
- Other deficiency are they are not complete or done.
- After Opal only 10-15 had developed these plans and don't even know how many localities have.
- After Andrew only 1 or 2 communities hit had a plan.
- Local Mitigation Strategy takes existing development and looks at where can improve individual infrastructure, buildings
- How can planning process help?
 - Make the environment less hazardous,
 - Protect natural features, ex dunes
 - Make structures more resistant – keep refining building code
 - Provides for evacuation and shelter
- Effective planning lessens impacts:
 - Prioritize public expenditures – all plans
 - Can use this element in land use plan to improve infrastructure so it can resist natural disasters. Not often done. This is why redevelopment plan is such an important tool.
 - Update plans 7 year EAR
 - Must address hazard mitigation and impacts of past storms, must analyze past storms
- Post Disaster Redevelopment planning
 - Take effect after storm event and guides immediate recovery operations at local level and redevelopment decisions.
 - DCA recommends that communities pass a post-disaster ordinance that immediately takes effect when there is a disaster
 - Set up building permit process
 - Establish building moratorium
 - ***Planning after the fact means lost money, lost time is lost money***
 - If pre-plan avoid some of the emotions, make the tough decisions before hand. This can give you a head start.
- Number of tools available
 - Building codes, zoning, subdivision regulations etc...
 - Purchase of development rights, can set up fund to target what you want to do, areas where you don't want to redevelop, you have funds to purchase land.
- DCA providing lots of support
- Updating local mitigation strategies
- ***Encouraging communities to integrate mitigation strategies into state plans, there is a lot of reluctance. This is an essential step though if want plans to be effective***
- Training opportunities

- DCA was working on modeling future land use scenarios along with surge zone maps and provide documentation to planners and officials.
- Developing hazard mitigation guidebooks - wildfire and historic resources elements are complete - balance historic resources with FEMA requirements
- Partnership with FEMA - FEMA had to fund similar rebuilds because pre-planning not done.
- Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties and a couple of other plans are complete, the plans do not go into the details and tough decisions.
- Other Initiatives:
 - *Coastal High Hazard Study Committee, Final report due by Feb 1 2006.*
 - *Likely to see legislation.*
 - Florida does have strict requirements, there are some efforts to weaken and others to strengthen.
 - Possible (as in Keys) to make it a concurrency issue before new development can take place.
 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Proposals
 - New Port Richey wants to develop TDR program
 - Statewide survey of post disaster redevelopment planning
 - Regional mitigation strategy
 - Dept. has asked for funding for development planning, governor instead focused on LIDAR and evacuation planning.

Kevin Lynott:

NOAA Storm Ready Communities Program

- StormReady – benefits communities, although national guidelines it is for counties and communities to help strengthen storm safety
- Prepares communities for weather events – Tsunami Ready is a sister program
- Incentives – Improves timeliness of warnings, aids EM managers, image incentive, *possible to reduce flood insurance premiums by gaining Community Rating System points*
- Ready Program has grown: in Feb 2003 there were 521 communities in 43 states, now there are 1,000 communities in 49 states
- Not just for local jurisdictions, now the state of Delaware has been certified
- Private companies like Home Depot are interested
- Establish communication and coordination plans
- Ask for 24-hour warning point and EOC.
- Receive critical warning information over various methods
- NOAA weather radio, weather wire, E managers weather information network, radio, tv, internet, cell phones, pagers, etc..
- Must monitor evolving weather and disseminate warnings
- Helps to mitigate

Questions and Answers

Q: For NWS, the 24 hour warning point, what is that, is it notification 24 hours in advance?

A: No it is fire or police that would be the warning point. The criteria are on the website and are based on population and depending upon population must meet 2 or 3 things instead of 1. If for example 1,000 and no county agency must designate a person to manage the system 24 hours a day and could carry it out.

It is a matter of communication and weather service will provide information and hopefully give plenty of lead time and then relay through many methods.

Q: For Maria and John – Can you envision a way that the federal consistency provision can be used to ensure mitigation strategies incorporated into rebuilding.

A: In Florida, the local comprehensive plans are incorporated into federal consistency, whether or not Florida uses this tool is another issue. In the Keys a number of developments were stopped based on federal consistency to stop growth in an at-risk area, this varies by those in political power. If the state wanted to raise the issues they have the tools.

Danny: Growth mgt legislation was added later to coastal program, not all sections in the plans are part of the coastal management program but coastal sections are. Growth Management use is a little vague and might not stand up to challenge

Q: John and Maria – How do you deal with emotional response to post disaster redevelopment plan. Most of plans have to go to public hearing and how do you get public support?

A: John- how involved is community in making these plans? In Mississippi, there initially a lot of misgivings; they didn't want outside planners, but the locals were part of the process, and it was their vision, and changes reflect your values.

Tina – MS flood elevation changes mandated by FEMA getting to be an ugly issue.

Maria – argue that really need to do this beforehand, after the fact people just want a house.

John – this is a teaching moment, now we in TX are thinking about this.

Sharon Hodge – homeowner granted a permit and shortly afterwards their home was condemned. This is a difficult situation. Learning that need to involve community immediately.

John – whether development or redevelopment, direct growth away from other landowners who might be upset. Ex. In Houston have lots of developers on periphery speculating

John – there is no God-given right to develop and make a profit, there is no guarantee, it is an issue when say can't develop here, there is a wetland.

John – need density need compact development, now the norm is to be isolate, how to change attitudes? How to market density? We can't twist people's arms, some are going to want that, we need to make density interesting, we see that it is profitable – Alys Beach selling lots like hotcakes. Asked why did you choose this community in Seaside? They liked fact could interact with neighbors and walk. We just have an ingrained idea that density is bad and green is good, the only way to fix the city is to green it up. I want the city to be the city and nature intact too, large intact areas. What are your values in terms of the city and countryside. Do you want it broken up into 1 acres? It is about education and working with developers and make it affordable. Maria – don't forget with density if want to protect open space, protect the open space. There is a lot of resistance, but if look at demographic trends have the young and elderly, the elderly want more active places to be where they don't have to drive, just need to convince people to develop it. John – going back to old folks, I wanted the country in the old age but now, think about difficulties of driving and being isolated on a farm. Have to make it as easy to develop density than to do standard development. Maria – we tried to reverse cluster development and standard development rules and got huge resistance.

Q: Seaside and Alys Beach – can't afford to live there, are second homes, and was good habitat that was destroyed, still need to drive there.

A: John – absolutely but better than developing 3x as much.

Q: Do you think it is the developer not wanting to do it or the public worried about property values?

A: John – all of the above. Most developers don't do mixed use. Cities are used to a standard method and don't like change and citizens are also worried. But when you see a good development, can't imagine seaside is real, got to look at real community examples. Can see examples of skyrocketing prices.

Maria – hurricane concurrency requirement is that a recommendation, some comments have been suggest, the keys is the only place it is implemented. Model out how many people they can accommodate in a 24 hour evacuation. One thought is to extend that requirement to other communities. Right now standard in community plan but don't link development to this. I think it is an interesting idea, but don't know if state will go this way.